

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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History

1. Tartu University was founded about the year 1630 by the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus. Then for a time it was closed, but it was reopened in 1802 under the Russians. Sometime in 1952, Tartu University celebrated its 150th anniversary, i. e., only its existence under the Russians was taken into account.
2. In 1952, about 4,000 students were studying there, at more than ten faculties. In 1951, the Faculty of Agronomy had been separated from the university and had become part of a newly-formed independent higher educational institute in Tartu - the Agronomical Academy, in which there were more than 1,000 students.

Ethnic Origin of Students

3. The students at Tartu University are chiefly Estonians, but there are also some Russians. There is a special department of Russian Philology at the university. Russian is taught in all faculties as a separate subject, as many of the students do not know the language.

Increased Use of Russian Language

4. before the Soviet occupation of Estonia many of the students read specialised literature not in Estonian, but in foreign languages, as it would have been too expensive to publish literature of this nature in Estonia, the population being so small. For example, medicine was studied in German, and geology in English. For this reason the students at Tartu still know foreign languages well and, in particular, nearly all know German. These languages are now being displaced by Russian. Lectures are given in either Estonian or Russian. Subjects, such as the principles of Marxism/Leninism, political economy, and philosophy, are read in Russian. Certain other subjects are also read in this language. The history of the USSR is also read in Russian. The reason given for this,

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is that the visiting lecturers (from Moscow or Leningrad) do not know Estonian.

Finno/Ugrian Section

5. The Estonian language is one of the Finno/Ugrian languages and belongs to the so-called Baltic/Finnish group. At Tartu University there is a Finno/Ugrian Section, headed by Professor Paul Ariste, an Estonian, who is a first-class linguist. In particular, he knows Finnish very well, has been in Finland, and in the 1930's some of his writings were published in Finnish academic journals.
6. Finnish, Hungarian, and other languages are read in the Finno/Ugrian Section. Many persons erroneously are under the impression that Finns and Estonians can understand each other without difficulty, but this is not the case. It is true that a Finn and an Estonian can, in case of extreme necessity, usually make themselves understood. As far as cultured speech is concerned, they cannot understand each other at all.

Estonian Students' and Professors' Reactions to Russification

7. [redacted] the strong national feeling of the Estonian students. To illustrate this [redacted] a visiting Russian lecturer on Marxism was booed by students when he explained that he was lecturing in Russian as there was no intellectual Estonian language. In general, however, Estonian students are worried about their futures and are silent at university meetings. [redacted] examples of free thinking (volnodumstvo) in Tartu which [redacted] in other parts of the USSR would result in immediate arrest. [redacted] an elderly professor categorically refused to vote at the elections. Another teacher at the university spoke against kolkhozy at a meeting, and when the Mendelists and Morganists were being sharply criticised in the USSR this same teacher [redacted] stated publicly: "However that may be and whatever they say, Mendel was, after all, a great scientist". He was, of course, rebuked and gradually reduced in status, but not arrested. This may have been because he was rather eccentric and [redacted] it is impossible to arrest everybody.

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